

# TRANSLINES EXPRESS

Feb. 2, 2022

## Snow hits hard in parts of western Kansas

By Lisa Mussman  
District Three

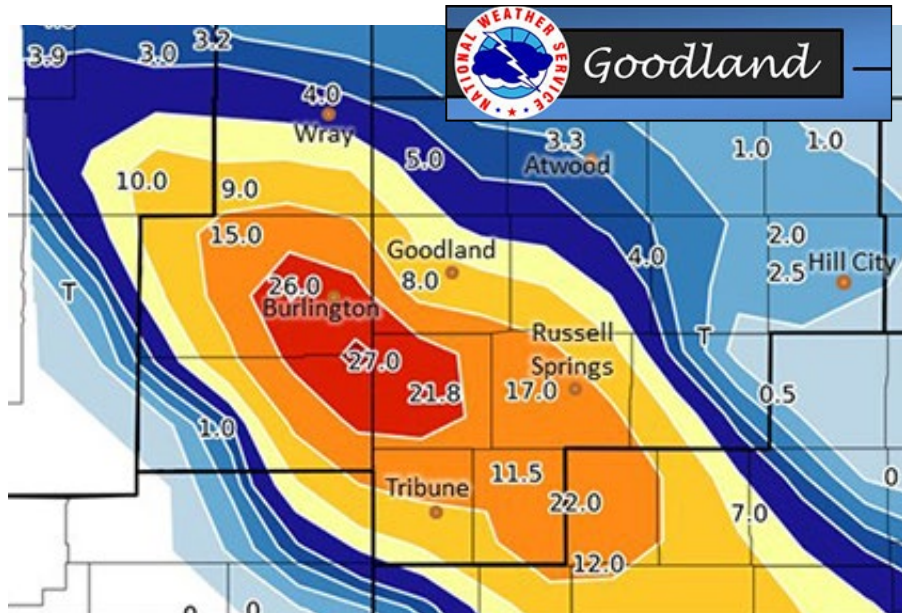
A winter storm blasted parts of western Kansas on Jan. 25, dropping upwards of 20 inches in some locations.

One of the hardest hit areas was Wallace County, where amounts ranged from 20 to 27 inches. Sharon Springs Subarea Supervisor Thad Vincent said he and his crews had been monitoring the forecast and were prepared for snow, but the largest estimates they had seen were for 5 to 7 inches. When that had been exceeded by late morning, Vincent knew this storm was going to be a big one.

Prior to hitting Kansas, the storm dumped substantial amounts in Colorado causing westbound I-70 to close at Goodland just before 11 a.m. Westbound travelers then began to divert on to U.S. 40 and K-27 to avoid the closure, not realizing the extent of the snow that was falling south of the interstate.

“When I-70 shut down for Colorado and the traffic hit U.S. 40, we didn’t stand a chance,” Vincent said. “Not only were all my routes snow packed and icy, but there was a steady stream of truck traffic running in zero visibility. I am thankful we had no rollovers or injury accidents because we would have struggled something terrible to get EMS and rescue to accidents.”

KDOT would later close U.S. 40 and K-27



*This map from the National Weather Service in Goodland shows the huge amounts of snow received in one location around the Kansas/Colorado border from the Jan. 25 storm. Sharon Springs is right at the spot the 21.8 amount of snow is on the map in the red oval.*

**More snow is predicted today. Check [www.KanDrive.org](http://www.KanDrive.org) before you travel.**



*KHP Capt. Travis Phillips saw a lot of stranded vehicles during the Jan. 25 snowstorm in western Kansas.*

Story/photos continue on page 2

## Parts of western Kansas get 20-plus inches of snow

*Continued from page 1*

because of the number of slide-offs and crashes.

With snowfall rates exceeding 2 inches an hour at times and no wind, Vincent said visibility was one of their biggest challenges. "It was nice to have snow without wind, but when it falls that fast, there is no way to keep routes safe for traffic or our operators," Vincent said.

Snowfall totals ranged from 20 inches near Sharon Springs to 27 inches at Mount Sunflower, the state's highest point. Crew members from Oakley and Hays were dispatched to Sharon Springs to help with the cleanup efforts.



*Garden City Subarea Supervisor Hector Terrones also saw numerous vehicles in the ditch during the snow storm on Jan. 25 on U.S. 50 between Garden City and Holcomb.*

*KHP Capt. Travis Phillips took this photo of snow surrounding the Wallace County Courthouse at night.*



### **TRANSLINES EXPRESS**

Published by the  
**Kansas Department of  
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary  
Eisenhower State  
Office Building  
700 SW Harrison  
Topeka, KS

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## Employee spotlight: Jim Riener, Phillipsburg Construction Office

*What's your job title?*

Construction Engineer  
(Phillipsburg Construction Office)

*What sort of duties do you have at work?*

I administer construction contracts which consist of highway and related projects in a five-county area.

*What's the most exciting part of your job?*

Seeing a project to completion after having been involved with that project from the very early stages.

*What's something you're proud of?*

My faith and my family – my wife Amy and I have five children, three girls and two boys.

*What's your favorite food?*

Pizza and lasagna would be some of my favorites.

*What's your favorite movie?*

I'm not a movie buff, but maybe "The Shawshank Redemption."

*What is your favorite song?*

"The Good Stuff" by Kenny Chesney...Bon Jovi also a favorite.

*Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?*

I officiate high school football and basketball. I also enjoy playing golf and reading.

*Do you have any pets?*

Sadly, no. My 15-year-old Border Collie/Sheltie Jake recently passed on; he was a good dog.

*Are you a sports fan? Who are your favorite teams?*

Yes, Nebraska Cornhuskers in college and Denver Broncos and KC Royals in professional sports.



KDOT employee Jim Riener with his wife, Amy, and five children.

*Are you a morning person or a night owl?*

Morning person that also stays up too late at night.

*Are you a coffee, tea or pop person?*

Coffee, usually black.

*What's something you find challenging about your work?*

One of the biggest challenges is the wide variety of construction activities that we encounter.

*What's your favorite season?*

Spring without a doubt.

*What three items would you take with you to a deserted island?*

Water, knife and survival handbook.

## GETTING TO KNOW

### OUR KDOT CO-WORKERS

Featuring an employee each month from different offices throughout KDOT.

# First phase of North Junction in Wichita completed

By Tom Hein  
District Five

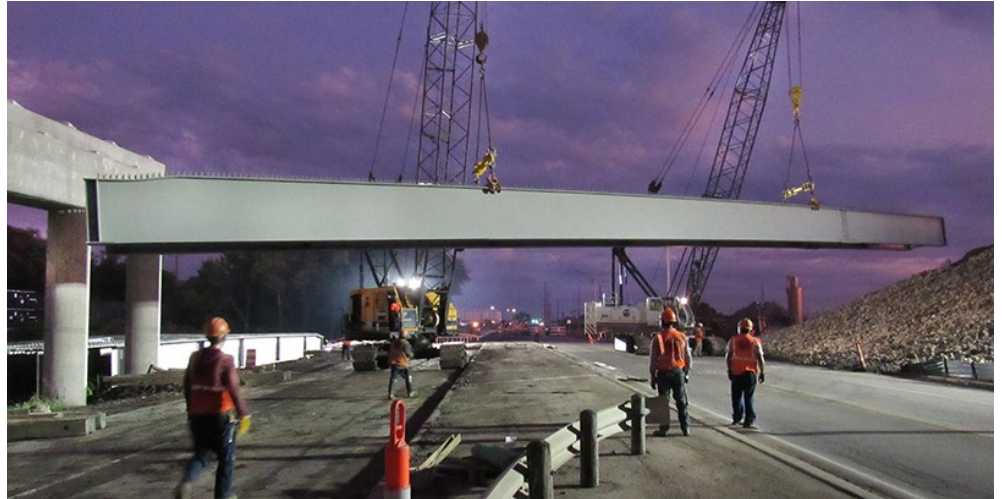
The first three-year project of the Wichita North Junction reconstruction is now finished. The I-235 Green Project was a preliminary necessity because of the condition of bridges built in the 1960s and the restrictive geometry of the Broadway interchange west of I-135.

The Green Project has created a more efficient 3-mile leg of I-235 that also carries K-96 traffic and is currently approaching 51,000 vehicles per day. New bridges, a reconstructed interchange and the addition of longer acceleration/deceleration lanes will help streamline traffic west of the North Junction.

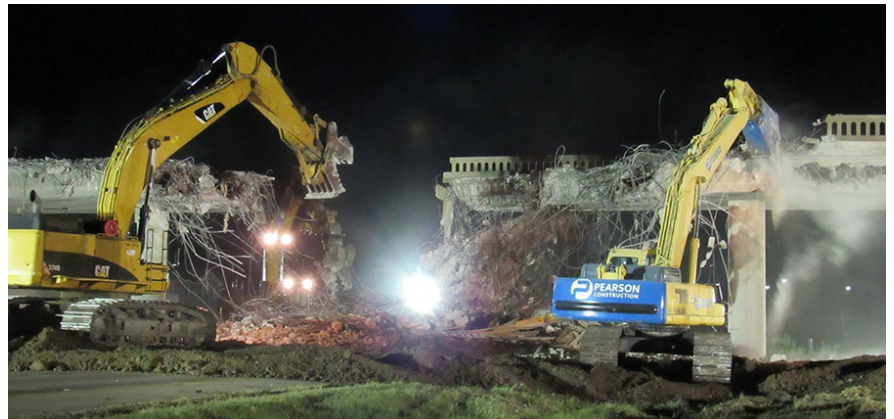
Also in progress at the junction is an accelerated phase of the Gold Project. New ramps from I-135 to I-235 are being constructed and will include a two-lane flyover ramp replacing a bottleneck loop ramp. The rest of the Gold Project will be let in September 2022. A future Purple Project completes the reconstruction of the junction, but it is not yet programmed.

Jeff Sims' road squad and Brad Rognlie's bridge squad designed the project. Click [HERE](#) to see a storyboard of the North Junction's future.

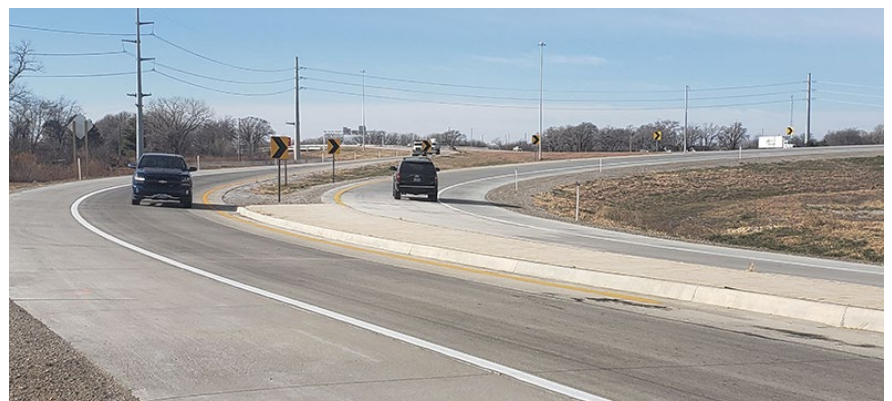
*At right, the new interchange ramps at Broadway allow large trucks to enter the highway and merge into traffic easier with wider ramp curves and extended acceleration lanes. Photos by Joe Ausilio and Tom Hein, District Five*



*The I-235 bridges over Broadway plus a rail track required long bridge beams and placement during overnight hours.*



*The Seneca Street bridge over I-235 was removed and replaced with a local road that will serve businesses and a small neighborhood north of the interstate.*



# KDOT employees celebrate 40 years of service

State employees celebrating 40 and 50 years of service usually gather in Topeka to highlight their accomplishments.

For the second year, a video of all state employees is being created by the Division of Administration.

Below are the 11 KDOT employees and towns they work in who reached this milestone - all are celebrating 40 years from July 1, 2020, to Dec. 31, 2021.

In the past, the employees were honored according to fiscal year, but it's changing to a calendar year honor.



*Carl Burgardt,  
Kansas City*



*David Dye,  
Meade*



*Gary Farlow,  
Topeka*



*Lynn Gormley  
Horton*



*Michael Hays,  
Topeka*



*Dale Hershberger,  
Clay Center*



*Michael Hollis  
Rolla*



*Larry Kjellberg,  
Ness City*



*Richard Krotz  
Belleville*

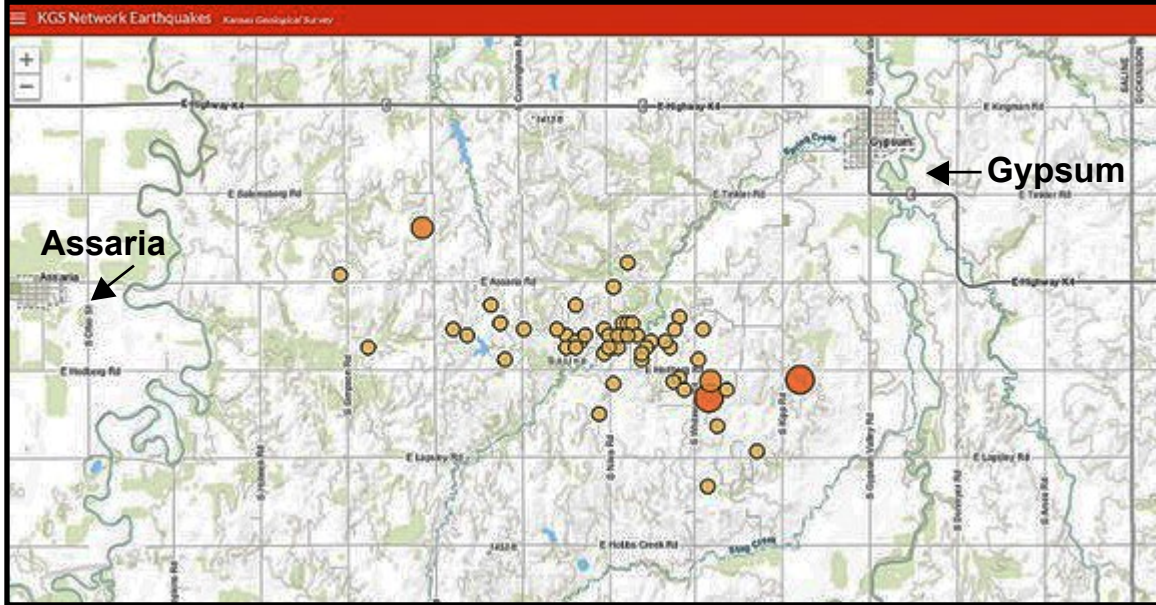


*Larry Meyer,  
Syracuse*



*Michael Sheley  
Colby*

**Thank you to all our employees celebrating a service anniversary - whether it's one year or many more, your efforts are greatly appreciated.**



According to KDOT's Kyle Halverson, almost 50 quakes of more than 2.0 magnitude – located in this graphic -- were measured recently near the Saline County town of Gypsum. Graphic courtesy of Kansas Geological Survey

## Here's how KDOT approaches earthquakes

By Tim Potter  
District Five

How would KDOT respond to a significant earthquake?

The question arises because of an increase in Kansas quakes in recent years, including a series of jolts over a few days starting on Dec. 8 near the Saline County town of Gypsum, said KDOT Chief Geologist Kyle Halverson.

In 2016, KDOT established a policy on whether the threshold is met for investigating a quake's effect on roadway structures, Halverson noted. The policy includes three requirements – each of which would trigger inspection of roadway structures:

- A quake “registering 5.0 magnitude or higher within the state.” The 5.0 threshold is based on United States Geological Survey data for structural damage, according to Halverson.
- A quake “involving peak ground velocity of at least 2 inches per second.”

- A KDOT Administration or District request.

So far, no quakes have met the threshold, but KDOT is considering whether to lower the magnitude threshold if it is determined that lesser quakes are deteriorating structures, Halverson said. So far, deterioration to road structures hasn't occurred.

He noted that two quakes got closer to the threshold: On June 22, 2019, a 4.5-magnitude quake was measured near the town of Plainville, north of Hays. And most recently, in December, a 4.3 quake was recorded near Gypsum. Both were naturally occurring quakes on fault lines, not from “induced seismicity.”

If a quake is strong enough to warrant an inspection under the policy, inspectors would focus on whether the damage made a structure unsafe, Halverson said. A quake-triggered inspection would be outside regularly scheduled or informal inspections.

And here's some trivia from KDOT's Chief Geologist: The biggest recorded quake in Kansas history occurred in 1867 – a 5.0 to 5.5 quake that hit near Wamego, cracking foundations and collapsing chimneys.

## Trivia!

*This was scheduled to run to celebrate Betty White turning 100 on Jan. 17. Sadly, White passed away on Dec. 31, so it's running instead to honor her.*

1. When and where was Betty White born?
2. She had a few television and modeling jobs in the late 1930s and early 1940s, but put her career on hold for this.
3. Betty was the first woman to produce a sitcom, "Life with Elizabeth," from 1953-55, which contributed to this.
4. Who was her third husband, and where did she meet him?
5. She starred in her feature film debut 1962. Who did she portray and what was the name of the film?
6. In 1983, White became the first woman to win a Daytime Emmy Award in this category.
7. In the "Golden Girls," what town was her character, Rose Nylund, from?
8. On what soap opera did she make 22 appearances?
9. In 2017, White became the oldest new member of this organization.

## KTA project bids have been awarded

Bids have been approved and contracts awarded on three upcoming Kansas Turnpike projects:

1. Contract 7728 (Construction Manager at Risk) for the construction of the new Topeka administration building was awarded to Hutton Corporation, Wichita, for a guaranteed maximum price of \$7,628,578.
2. Contract 7802 for construction of five sets of cashless toll zones from mile marker 56.4 to 122.9 on I-35/KTA and extension of a 12-foot by 13-foot reinforced concrete box drainage structure was awarded to Dondlinger & Sons Construction Company Inc., Wichita for the bid amount of \$6,643,086.81. This work is the second set of cashless tolling zones to be constructed on the Kansas Turnpike for its conversion to cashless tolling in 2024.



3. Contract 7820 for pavement surfacing from mile marker 0 to mile marker 13 on I-35/KTA, including surfacing at the Belle Plaine Service Area, was awarded to Koss Construction Co., Topeka, for the bid amount of \$8,071,641.60.

# U.S. 169 construction continues in Neosho, Allen counties

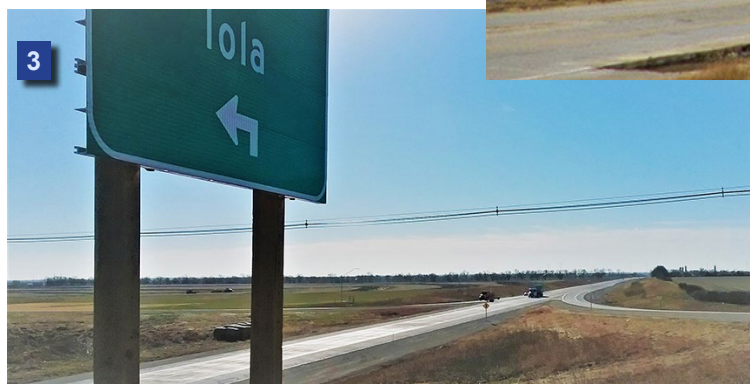
By Priscilla Petersen  
District Four

Activity on a 13-mile U.S. 169 pavement reconstruction project in Neosho and Allen counties is moving north at a steady pace.

Work began on the \$32.6 million project March 2021. Construction is complete on the first two sections, extending from K-39 south to 130th Street in Neosho County. The contractor, Emery Sapp & Sons Inc., is currently working north of Chanute, between K-39 and the Plummer Avenue exit. KDOT will close the last section for reconstruction this summer, running from Plummer to 1.7 miles north of the Neosho-Allen county line.

Within the past three years KDOT has completed roadway reconstruction and widening improvements on U.S. 169 in Anderson and Allen counties. Future construction includes adding passing lanes on U.S. 169 north of K-47 and south of Thayer.

Jeff Sims' road squad and Paul Kulseth's bridge squad designed the project.



1. U.S. 169 pavement reconstruction was well underway in this aerial photo taken in September south of Chanute. Photo by Warren Ebberts.  
2. Construction is continuing this winter on U.S. 169 north of K-39. 3. U.S. 169 is open south of Chanute. Photos by Priscilla Petersen





## Wind repairs continue

*The high winds that hit most of Kansas on Dec. 15 damaged more than signs. 1. Workers from the Ellsworth Subarea office and Heineken Electric remove a damaged light tower. 2/3. Employees from the Salina Subarea and District Office repair the cross bars that close the Interstate on westbound I-70 at the Hedville exit west of Salina. Photos by Ashley Perez, District Two*

## Trivia answers

1. Jan. 17, 1922, in Oak Park, Ill.
2. To volunteer for the American Women's Voluntary Services when World War II broke out. She transported military supplies through California and also participated in events for troops before they were deployed overseas.
3. Being named honorary Mayor of Hollywood in 1955.
4. Allen Ludden, while she was guest starring on his

- game show, "Password."
5. Kansas Senator Elizabeth Ames Adams in "Advise & Consent."
6. Outstanding Game Show Host for the NBC show, "Just Men!"
7. St. Olaf, Minnesota.
8. "The Bold and the Beautiful."
9. The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences.

# Actions define our destiny

By Troy Whitworth  
Director of Safety

“Watch your thoughts, they become your words; watch your words, they become your actions; watch your actions, they become your habits; watch your habits, they become your character; watch your character, it becomes your destiny.”

This is a quote by Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu. I could probably write a book on this one simple quote. To me, this simply states, you are defined by what you think, say and do. Some say your character is defined by what you do when no one else is looking. I believe there may be some truth to that.

Do what I say, not what I do. Have you ever heard that before? It is usually someone trying to justify their actions by holding you accountable, and they may believe they don't have to abide by the same rules. They may believe they have more experience or are in a position of authority, which allows them to break the rules. Breaking the rules catches up to everyone in one way or another.

If you are in a position of authority and break the rules, it tells people this rule is insignificant. Employees may even lose a little respect for you because of your disregard for the rule. Remember, your actions speak louder than words. Lead by example. If you are going to talk the talk, you need to walk the walk. Breaking some rules can even put your life at risk.

Have you ever known a person who seems to have a dark cloud hanging over their head? If anything bad is going to happen, it will happen to them. Is it destiny that decides this dark cloud outcome or is it something else? Can we change our destiny or does bad luck just follow some of us around?

Each of us were born with a gift. Something we are really good at. Some people are/were great athletes, great teachers, great hunters, great leaders, great followers and some haven't reached their full potential yet. All of us know those folks who make everything look effortless. For some, they are a natural at what they do. For others, they have worked very hard at mastering their craft. They didn't become good at it by chance, it was because of hard work and determination.



Each of us can make changes to areas of our lives, and the best way is to change habits. Something as simple as putting on a seat belt when you get in a vehicle. For those who experience a crash, wearing a seat belt, or not, is potentially a life altering decision. Ditching the distractions is another way of changing outcomes. Many incidents and accidents have resulted from distractions. Change your focus to become the best safety advocate for your life.

Each day we can either wake up and wonder what bad thing is going to happen to us today or focus on ways we can improve our chances for a better day. Your choice. For your family and mine.

# KDOT recognized for drone use in operations

By Delaney Tholen  
District One

Collaborating with drone experts and industry leaders nationwide, KDOT created a program in 2016 to use drones, or unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), for advanced operations. Use of these drones improves safety by removing KDOT employees from unnecessarily hazardous duty, providing a significant cost savings and allowing for more accurate assessments of infrastructure.

According to Bob Brock, KDOT Division of Aviation Director, "For example, before the use of drones, if we needed to determine whether a light tower was structurally safe to leave on a highway, a crane would be used to bring the tower to the ground for inspection, then return the tower to a standing position- each time, this would cost about \$5,000."

In addition to regularly inspecting the 1,469 KDOT high mast light towers, the drones capture images of projects and data that cannot be seen with the naked eye. Thermal and infrared sensors detect pavement



*Engineering Technician Ian Stringham is one of KDOT's drone operators. Recently while inspecting a high mast light tower at K-7 and K-32, he also captured a photo of a bird sitting on the mast.*



*KDOT drone in flight. Photo by Division of Aviation.*

conditions and erosion, allowing roadways to be fixed sooner and damage to be prevented.

"Each of these efforts fall within Secretary Julie Lorenz's vision for incorporating emerging technologies that represent increased safety for KDOT operators," Brock said. Secretary Lorenz currently serves as the Chair of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' Council on Aviation.

KDOT has 40 licensed drone operators across all six districts, trained at the Kansas State University Aerospace and Technology Campus. In April, the Division of Aviation will host a Federal Highway Administration UAS conference in Salina for 13 states.

The Federal Aviation Administration has twice recognized the KDOT Kansas UAS Integration Pilot Program as one of the top five states to use UAS for advanced operations, most recently in 2020.

More about the KDOT Kansas Unmanned Aerial Systems Integration Pilot Program can be found [HERE](#).

# District Six employees do what they can to make it work

By Tracy Statton  
District Five

District Six in southwest Kansas, like most districts, is working short-staffed. The difference: It's functioning without key positions and has been for several years.

District Six is without a Subarea Supervisor, Public Affairs Manager, Construction Engineer for Area Two, a Construction Engineer for Area Three and Engineering Technician Series in all the construction offices. District Engineer Ron Hall said they're doing the best they can with who they have. "We restructured the engineering management in the district to make best use of the staff we have, after years of not being able to fill Area Engineer and Construction Engineer positions."

District Six employees know how to work as a team. They're used to being asked to do multiple tasks.

"District assistants have taken on more supervision responsibilities, as a result of the reorganization. Other staff are covering for vacancies by doing tasks beyond their normal area of responsibility," Hall said.

Although everyone is pitching in and doing their part, it's still difficult to get everything done. "We are well beyond doing more with less, we are doing less with less. Each day, in nearly all aspects of the district, we make choices not to do things that once were routinely done, due to lack of staff," Hall said.

Hall said the most difficult aspect of not having

*"Do what you can,  
with what you have,  
where you are."*

**THEODORE ROOSEVELT**



these roles filled is not getting everything done. "The frustration of not being able to accomplish tasks that should be done but aren't urgent enough to rise to the top of the stack."

While it can be discouraging, Hall said he tries to keep up the morale. "I have a Teddy Roosevelt quote on my office wall: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." That's the best encouragement I can provide folks."

The staff at District Six continue to work together and work with what they have. Hall said the lack of help keeps him up at night. "We are losing the ability to train new employees in some areas. The inability to hire and retain ETs has resulted in significant cost to contract the inspection of projects."

Hall's only hope to fill the roles are offering more competitive pay and benefits. But he adds there is a great opportunity in District Six to get experience and potentially move up quickly.

# Thank you for your service

## Retirees

Employee who will retire on March 1:

### District Five

**Alan Perry**, Engineering Technician, Wichita

Employees who retired on Feb. 1:

### Headquarters

**Lyle Willetts**, System Analyst III, Information Technology

### District Two

**Larry Michael**, Equipment Operator Senior, Lincoln

### District Six

**Jesus Casanova**, Equipment Operator, Garden City

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**Employees planning to retire** - make sure you send your home email address to [Kim.stich@ks.gov](mailto:Kim.stich@ks.gov) if you want to continue to receive Translines.

**If you know a KDOT retiree who is not receiving Translines** - please let them know as well.

## In Memory

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT employee Johnnie Lira, who passed away on Jan. 15 in Garden City. Lira started at KDOT in 1988 and was the Highway Maintenance Superintendent in Ulysses. He served for nearly 34 years. He is survived by his wife, a son, a daughter, four grandchildren and other family members. Lira enjoyed being a coach for kids wrestling and baseball, and wrestling coach for Ulysses High School. He also served as a Deacon, Sunday school teacher and children's church leader. Lira could also be found fishing and playing golf.



*Johnnie Lira*

## Milestones

KDOT employees celebrating state service anniversaries in February.

### 30 years

**Jeffrey Henderson**, Engineering Technician Specialist, Topeka

**James Leaden**, Professional Civil Engineer I, Topeka

**Sabra Loebel**, Procurement Officer II, Topeka

### 20 years

**Andrea Barnes**, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Parker

**Derek Bengtson**, System Software Supervisor, Hutchinson

**Darren Miller**, Information Systems Manager, Perry

### 10 years

**Jeffery Nalley**, Equipment Operator Senior, Altoona

**Scott Schiller**, Applications Development Supervisor, Pomona

**Jason Woodward**, Equipment Mechanic, Lansing

**Ardon Zanghi**, Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Satanta

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree Kenneth F. "Inky" Engelken, who passed away on Jan. 23 in Topeka. Engelken retired in the late 1990s, he was a Soils Party Chief.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree Dale Crismas, who passed away on Jan. 27 in Independence. Crismas started at KDOT in 1967. He was an Engineering Technician Senior at the Independence Area office. Crismas retired in 2005 after more than 37 years of service.

Condolences to the family and friends of KDOT retiree William "Bill" McAdoo, who passed away on Jan. 30 in Topeka. He worked at Headquarters and retired in 1992 after 31 years of service.